

Does it profit me or thee?

"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"

Matthew, Mark and Luke quote Jesus to this effect in their Gospels. Not worthy to preach soul-saving, I presume to address the preservation of our mutual savings. Given any reserves remain, many citizens enthralled in the current economic malaise, shudder at any proposition to lessen the meager balance.

I want to recast Christ's words like this: What gains a county supervisor, or a city counselor to approve another rich union contract only to vote against the budget subsuming this contract? After all, we must enrich these contracts with "cost of living" increases. That only seems fair, right? What serves his fellow man that a County Executive cut a budget, throws the knife at the feet of the too many supervisors, too weak to sacrifice the lamb.

What gains a supervisor to whisper "Aye" to the annual, inevitable wage and benefit increase, only to bellow "Nay!" when the subsequent budget vote comes to the floor? Where are the counselors, the top of the County seat, when faced with the ire of an old workmate, the anger of those who paid to elect them to power, where is their voice? Do they fail the purpose of an oath turning that power back on the folks they have sworn to serve?

I'll tell you what it has gained them? Re-election! Time and time again, we have allowed our representatives to shrink from alphabet soup public unions, the cacophony of woes, and litanies of want, then pose for the holy card by rejecting the resulting budget agreement, or pushing back, making the difficult choice of handing over the "cost of living" raise while the Senior citizens amongst have been handed an empty bag for two years running. The deed completed, the reward of re-election gathered in, and soon the rags and the sackcloth are tossed in the corner behind the desk.

Quietly, our so-called fiscally conservative supers, councilors and execs have shirked confronting the most expensive and fastest growing budget line item, yet we reward them when they cast the very public NO vote on a levy hike, and shirk the weight of the tongue, the yoke and brace.

These two-faced representatives have got to put down the fiscal foot or be cast shivering into the land of taxpayers in their hovels clutching their wallets as the tax collector pounds on their doors.

Let them feel what we feel!

Let them share our ritual robbery!

Let them shoulder the annual betrayal!

"The art of taxation consists in so plucking the goose as to obtain the largest possible amount of feathers with the smallest possible amount of hissing." say Jean Baptiste Colbert and "No mas" say Roberto Duran, pugilists each in their own right.

You cannot vote FOR a budget's greatest unchecked expense and then vote against the budget and pretend you are a conservative vox populi.

Look over at Manitowoc County, where we get our water. County Executive Bob Ziegelbauer – a Democrat at heart, though his party left him, so he left it – has stood up to his labor brothers and spoke truth to power: 'You must bear your fair share of budget pain.' His call for concessions has not won him wide vocal acclaim. But voters have returned him to county office. I only hope they return him to the Legislature. He needs a seat on the budget-writing Joint Finance Committee, which Democrats denied him due to his fiscal-fisted conservatism.

Maybe our venerable Board could outsource budget prep to Manitowoc as well.

Meanwhile, vote for real conservatives who will cast the tough votes against rich union worker contracts, instead of just being a show-vote against the budget.

Richard Parins — President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 26th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

BCTA Comments on Brown County Budget.

The following statement regarding the Brown County Budget for 2011 was presented at a news conference immediately following the October 21, monthly meeting.

“To all Brown County Board Supervisors:

Prior to the last election cycle, the Brown County Taxpayers’ Association circulated a survey to all of you, either as incumbents or as challengers. The first question on the survey asked whether you would “support limiting Brown County spending to growth in population plus growth of inflation percentage” with a 2/3rd majority vote of the County Board required to exceed this cap. We are now following up that survey with this letter.

A quick review of the federal government’s Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics’ calculations for the CPI reveals an annual inflation rate of approximately 1% (+/-) ~0.5% depending upon what sectors of the economy one is evaluating. Additionally, the US Census Bureau reports that from April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2009 the population of Brown County increased by 9.1%. On average, that’s approximately 1% per year. That would translate to a Brown County 2011 budget (i.e., “spending”) increase of approximately 2% utilizing the formula in our survey’s question above.

We track our surveys and your responses. In light of the recent County Budget proposed by County Executive Tom Hinz that representing an overall 2% increase in county spending and believe it critical for you to understand how he proposes to achieve that budget. Moreover, you need to understand which department budgets are being increased or decreased comparing last year’s original budgetary amounts and projected end-of-year spending.

Therefore, we ask you be fair, both to yourselves and County taxpayers, by requiring County Executive Hinz to provide a documented and itemized budget for your review and approval. We also believe it to be good practice, if not already employed, for the County Executive to provide the Board a quarterly variance report. These suggested measures will provide fiscal discipline and rigor, serve to keep the County Executive accountable, and furnish a baseline for the upcoming budgets benchmarking any deviations or transfers between various accounts, departments, legal expenses or “accounting buckets”, as 2011 unfolds. Eventually this Budget process may find its way online allowing County residents access to the process under recent “Sunshine” laws

We thank you in advance for your continued diligence in securing the interests of the County’s taxpayers and our future.

Sincerely, Richard Parins, President
Brown County Taxpayers Association”

National Debt Update.

It just doesn’t want to go away by itself. As of the first of November, 2010, the United States National debt climbed to **\$13,668,098,711,919.00** an increase of **\$123 Billion** or so since last month at this time. The good news is that while it has been increasing at a steady rate of \$3-4 Billion per day for the last several months, and has not been increasing. The bad news is that it has been increasing at a steady rate of \$3-4 Billion per day for the past several months and has not been decreasing.

A couple of month ago Pres. Obama showed real concern at a campaign stop for one of his supports by announcing he was proposing a stimulus of \$200 Billion for small business.

His theory of helping small business seems to be handing out money to his favorite states to invest in whatever pork project that comes along and hope some of it trickles down to small business. At the next campaign stop he proposed handing out \$250 to each Social Security recipient as apology for not having given a COLA increase this year. The nations states, schools, cities, and institutions are all hurting for money and turn to the Federal Government for relief. While these and many others sound nice and are appreciated by many they simply increase the National Debt and will have to be repaid sometime in the future.

We’ll see what he does after November 2.
Jim Frink – BCTA

Annual Election of BCTA Officers.

The BCTA fiscal year ends on October 31, of each year, and the By-Laws require that new directors be elected or re-elected to serve three terms. At the Oct. 21, monthly meeting, the following were nominated and approved to serve three terms. Jim Frink, John Gower, Richard Heidel, David Nelson, Richard Parins, Steve Terrien, and Ross Townsend (First-term director.)

Officers elected for one-year terms were:

President: Richard Parins
1st Vice President: Rich Carlstedt
2nd Vice President: Rick Hood
Treasurer: Tom Sladek
Secretary: Dave Nelson

The BCTA By-Laws are available on our website:

www.BCTAxpayers.org

“An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile, hoping it will eat him last.” . . . Winston Churchill

“Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.” . . . Will Rogers

“The one sure thing about politics is that what goes up come down and what goes down often comes up.” . . . Richard Nixon

BCTA Comments on proposed Green Bay Schools Budget.

In addition to the statement to the press October 21, regarding the BCTA position on the proposed Brown County Budget for 2011, a statement was released to the press regarding the proposed 2011 budget for the Green Bay Area School District. Following is a press release covering this statement.

* * PRESS RELEASE * *

“Green Bay Schools raise property tax without justification. BCTA opposes raising taxes to fatten district cash reserves. Assails use of Community Service Fund to raise taxes on local residents.

The Brown County Taxpayers Association today said the Green Bay School Board is poised to raise school property taxes without justification. “There is no valid reason for a property tax increase,” said Rich Carlstedt, a Vice President of the government watchdog group. “The district is awash in money.”

The school district acknowledged it just completed its 2009-2010 fiscal year with a surplus of \$5.8 million. District expenses were \$233.1 million and tax revenues were \$238.9 million. Yet, the district intends to raise the property tax levy by \$3.1 million, an increase of 4.1%.

The district intends to use the \$5.8 million surplus from the recently completed year to increase cash reserves by 18%. When coupled with last year’s action to retain surplus tax dollars in the cash reserves, these reserves will now have increased 58% (\$14 million) over a two-year period.

Carlstedt said “there is simply no justification for increasing the property tax levy for purposes of stockpiling tax money in district cash reserves. The school district is saying a vast increase in their cash reserves is important enough to sock taxpayers with a 4% tax increase – where is the compassion for taxpayers on the part of this school board?”

The BCTA was also critical of the district’s use of the Community Service Fund (CSF), spending which gets zero state aid revenue and falls 100% on property taxpayers. The district plans to spend \$3.2 million on expenditures it categorizes under the CSF. Carlstedt maintained “this district’s use of the CSF defies the intent of the state law that established the fund, and transfers 3.1 million dollars of core function spending completely onto the property taxpayer. If the district kept this spending where it belongs – in the general fund – the state would pay two thirds. Why does the district simply walk away from two million dollars of state aid which would give the property tax payers some relief? They should eliminate the CSF, put the spending in the general fund, and end their plans to raise the property tax levy.”

Carlstedt noted the CSF “was intended for spending on things like weekend basketball leagues where districts charged fees to cover the cost. In Green Bay, the district packs all sorts of core educational costs into the CSF, and the property taxpayer is left holding the bag. I wish the school board members would stand up and give the taxpayers some justification for this.”

Rich Carlstedt – BCTA

Next Years Green Bay Area Schools Budget.

This is the time of year when all school districts must submit their budget for the current school year

At the October School Board meeting, the Green Bay School District passed a record budget for the 2010-11 school year.

The planned expenditure of 244.2 Million dollars is 11.1 million over last year’s actual spending of \$ 233.1 million, or a 4.6 % increase.

District taxpayers will see the Tax Levy go from 76.4 Million to 79.3 Million. These numbers include the recently passed 16 million+ dollar referendum last April for computer upgrades and maintenance on buildings. The tax increase as a result of a higher Levy means an additional 3.8 % will be added in the school portion of your real estate tax bill in December.

The BCTA believes these increases are unnecessary and issued a Press Release on October 21 after our October meeting and before the Board voted on the budget. The recent Green Bay salary settlement with the teachers union resulted in a 3.9 % increase, which the BCTA believes is unjustifiably high for this area and the current economic conditions we all face. Text of the press release may be found on the BCTA website. Last year the district was awarded almost 9 million dollars in stimulus funds (not included in above). Additionally, the Green Bay District saw an increase in State Aid for this year, even though State Funding has diminished in most all districts state wide.

Two issues are most notable for taxpayers to be concerned:

The Cash Reserves for the school district have increased from \$ 22,000,000+ to approx \$ 38,000,000 during the past two years. This represent over 15 % of the budget and during these hard times and low interest rates, represents an unnecessary hardship on the taxpayers. The BCTA asked that the 3 million dollars increase in the tax levy be taken from this reserve account, avoiding a property tax increase for district homeowners. The School Board differed, and ignored our request when they passed the 2010-11 budget.

The School District in Green Bay is also charging taxpayers \$ 3,164,388 directly on their taxes for services to the Community (called the Community Service Fund). This program was started 3 years ago by Green Bay, invoking the program that Legislation created 10 years ago, which was for funding of “noncurricular activities” like men’s basketball in the evenings, or a pancake breakfast for a Saturday football game. All such charges go directly to the bottom line of the property tax bill without any cost sharing by the State. The BCTA has engaged the Board for what the BCTA believes to be wrongful account charges and interpretations being used for this account. The Board at the October 25, 2010 meeting acknowledged these interpretation concerns , and voted to have a legal review of the State Statute [120.13(19)] by an independent attorney for further clarification. We will keep you posted.

Rich Carlstedt

“It is said that democracy is the worst form of government, except all the others that have been tried.”

. . . **Winston Churchill**

“People never lie so much as after a hunt, during a war, or before an election.”

. . . **Otto von Bismarck**

Directors Amend BCTA Bylaws.

At the BCTA meeting on October 21st, the Board of Directors amended the BCTA bylaws to incorporate a new statement of purpose. The change was proposed and unanimously endorsed by the Executive Committee, which supplied the following statement in support of the amendment:

“The Amended Article II broadens the statement of purpose of the BCTA. It expands the Association’s scope from a narrow, limited focus on tax policy and tax matters to embrace a broader set of public policy issues affecting the prosperity and economic freedom of citizens. The Executive Committee of the BCTA is in unanimous support of the amendment, believing it reflects the broader needs of public vigilance toward those matters which influence and preserve the economic system from which all Americans have benefited.” Following is the resolution of amendment which was passed by the Directors.

Article II of the bylaws is amended to read as follows:

II ARTICLE - Purpose

The Association shall be non-partisan. The mission of the Association shall be to promote:

- (a) Individual freedom and citizen responsibility.
- (b) Limited government which is fiscally responsible, transparent and accountable to the people.
- (c) Economic policy that encourages free markets, promotes entrepreneurship, respects property rights, and expands opportunity for the people of Brown County to prosper and live free, productive lives.

The Association’s actions in support of its mission shall include:

- (a) Educating citizens about public policy alternatives, and the actions of government leaders, officials and agencies.
- (b) Encouraging active and participative citizenship among the people of Brown County.
- (c) Influencing public policy through research, development and discussion of alternatives, collaboration with similarly focused groups, and advocacy.

The entire By-Laws of the Brown County Taxpayers Association are available on our website, www.BCTAxpayers.org.

Should Social Security Benefits Be Reduced?

In a few weeks the Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform is scheduled to hand down recommendations on how to reduce the Federal deficit. It is expected conservative members of this committee will sharpen their knives for Social Security even though cost of living increases have already been discontinued for two years in a row.

Social Security was established as a separate defined benefit entity supported by contributions of workers matched by employers, and has no effect on the federal deficit. Social Security should be able to pay full benefits until 2037, and after that still pay three-quarters of benefits until 2084.

Social Security ran a surplus of \$122 billion last year and has accumulated a reserve of \$2.54 trillion, which is scheduled to grow to \$4.2 trillion by 2024. The government spends the surplus and issues government securities that make up this trust fund. Changes in demographics may cause some shortfalls after 2037, but this can be fixed with changes to preserve the system for future generations.

Cutting benefits at this time would cause economic hardships for millions of Americans while having no effect on the deficit. It would set a poor example of government policy at a time when massive stimulus funds are being injected to boost the economy and Congress itself is benefiting from their own pay increases. Private accounts may be great for Wall Street, but leave individuals playing Russian roulette.

Jim Smith - BCTA

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.BCTAxpayers.Org
Email, BCTA@ExecPc.Com

“You can’t be for big government, big taxes, and big bureaucracy and still be for the little guy.”

. . . **Ronald Reagan**

“A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both.”

. . . **Dwight D. Eisenhower**

“Politicians have immense power to do harm to the economy, but the have very little power to do good.”

. . . **Walter Williams**

Articles and views appearing in the “TAX TIMES” do not necessarily represent the official position of the Brown County Taxpayers Association. We want to encourage discussion and input on current issues of taxpayer interest and invite your comments or articles suitable for future “TAX TIMES.” Please send them to the BCTA, P.O. Box 684, Green Bay, WI 54305-0684, or call Jim Frink at 336-6410. E-Mail BCTA@ExecPC.Com.

OCTOBER MEETING NOTES. POLICE CHIEF ARTS SPEAKS TO BCTA.

Monthly Brown County Taxpayers Association October 21, 2010 at Titledown Brewing Co.

Green Bay Police Chief Jim Arts presented an overview of the Green Bay Police Department. The Department has three divisions: Patrol, Investigative, and Support. The Support Division provides records and vehicle maintenance services. Staffing includes 187 sworn officers (193 authorized) and 38.5 civilians (43.5 authorized). The reduced number of actual employees results from budget limitations. The Department is also responsible for 75 school crossing guards. In 2009, the Department responded to 88,000 calls.

The Green Bay Police Department budget for 2007 was \$22.6 million. For 2010, it is \$23.9 million, for an average increase of less than 2 percent per year. Personnel costs amount to about 93 percent of the annual Department budget. Chief Arts explained that overtime is a complex issue. Adding more employees may reduce overtime costs, but not total costs. Benefit packages for additional employees may be more costly than paying overtime to existing employees. Conversely, overtime increases retirement costs.

A large part of Department overtime results from Packer games. However, the Packer organization compensates the City for additional policing costs for Packer games. Overtime is the source of many labor grievances. Chief Arts stated that the Department had 100 labor grievances when he became Chief in the summer of 2006. Most of them have been resolved and the relationship with the union has been greatly improved, which reduces the potential for future grievances. There were no grievances in 2010 and only eight in 2009. All eight were withdrawn by the union. There were no City labor costs incurred on grievances for these two years.

To improve the effectiveness of the Green Bay Police Department with minimal effect on Green Bay property taxpayers, Chief Arts has aggressively pursued federal and state grants for additional equipment and training facilities. To date, the department has received approvals for over \$1.6 million of grant and federal funding. Major items funded by grants include a new shooting range, squad car video equipment, and video surveillance equipment. Department efficiency has been significantly improved by a new records system, developed by a very skilled Department officer. A backlog of several months for records filing has been eliminated and filing is now current on a daily basis.

Responding to a question about trends in crime, Chief Arts noted that young people are becoming greater concerns.

Brown County Supervisor Tony Theisen discussed the bid awarded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for \$2.4 million to build a causeway to Renard Island. Bids for around \$700,000 by two local firms were rejected because they were not disadvantaged businesses. The contract was then awarded to a HubZone company from Milwaukee that is minority owned, and did not bid on the project originally. Supervisor Theisen is presenting a resolution to the Brown County Board and the Green Bay City Council to protest this flagrant waste of tax dollars to the Corps of Engineers.

Tom Sladek presented a new BCTA mission statement, and by-law changes which were unanimously approved. The Next meeting will be Nov. 18, 2010 at Titledown Brewing. Details on the last page of this Tax Times. **Dave Nelson – Secretary**

“A government which robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul.” . . . **George Bernard Shaw**
“Do you ever get the feeling that the only reason we have elections is to find out if the polls were right?” . . . **Robert Orben**
“Liberals claim to want to give a hearing to other views, but then are shocked and offended to discover there are other views.” . . . **William F. Buckley Jr.**

Things That Make Us Wonder.

THE 14th AMENDMENT.

One of the frustrations in dealing with illegal immigration has been the 14th amendment of the Constitution which provides that children born in the United States can automatically become U. S. Citizens, even while their parents can be deported.

This amendment was passed in 1868, immediately after the Civil War, and was intended for an entirely different set of circumstances than we have today. We were a growing country, had serious wounds to address and provide for the future. At the time, we also were establishing organized and regulated provisions for immigration from countries all over the world which has served us well for the past 150 years. However, it may be time to revise the 14th amendment.

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SETTING AN EXAMPLE.

President Obama has proudly installed solar panels on the roof of the White House as an example to illustrate his commitment to “going green”. No doubt the U. S. Capitol and Pentagon will be next.

This may be the wave of the future but it would be interesting to know how many windmills or solar panels it would take to equal the energy from a nuclear power plant

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DO THEY ACTUALLY KEEP TRACK?

Reported Federal Government spending for the fiscal year ending Sep. 30, was \$3.45 trillion, second only to 2009 when the federal government spent \$3.52 trillion.

While this years numbers indicate a decline in spending, they include \$262 billion in bank loans from 2009 which were repaid along with fewer loans for home purchases due to the economy. Most expense items such as unemployment, medicare, medicaid and defense were all considerably higher.

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PAYING FOR NEGATIVE ADS.

No question that spending by special interest groups helps to muddy up political campaigns. In general candidates seem to welcome all the help they can get in a tightly contested race and special interests and PACs seem to have more leeway sponsoring negative ads.

An article in the *Wall Street Journal* claims the biggest outside spender so far in the 2010 campaigns has been the public employees union, AFSCME. These people obviously have a lot to gain from the elections in the form of wages and benefits paid by taxpayers at a time when the economy is struggling.

What is ironic is that their political contributions are in effect paid by taxpayers in the form of deductions from their pay checks for their union dues. In other words, taxpayers are paying for advertising not necessarily in their interests.

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PRESERVING FOR THE FUTURE.

If true this would be great news for the United States. Stories keep circulating about huge oil reserves in our western states that are actually greater than those in all the rest of the world.

No word of what physical problems would be encountered in getting this oil to market, or what environmental considerations would do to hinder the process. In the mean time there is no question we are burning oil at a unsustainable rate..

Our politicians and their supporters sometimes seem more concerned with the environment than actual conservation of this resource. This may be necessary, but seeking and developing new energy sources if we want to enjoy things like NASCAR is also necessary. It is important to think about both the environment and what we will use for energy 50, 100 and 150 years down the line for our grandchildren and hopefully their grandchildren.

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POLLUTION FROM THE PAST.

We agree that preserving the environment is important, but some of the things our government did in the past may come back haunt us.

An article in the last Popular Mechanics claims that between 1917 and 1970 the government dumped about 32,000 tons of surplus lewisite, mustard, and chlorine gas along with various explosive devices of various sites in the oceans off of our shores. Sort of like dumping whiskey down the toilet to get rid of it.

While the sites were marked the stuff is still there, mostly in steel drums that are starting to deteriorate. The options are to try and recover the stuff and figure out something else to do or let nature take its course and have something else polluting

the oceans, killing the fish and contaminating the beaches.

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“US”, “WE”, “our Side”, “YOU and ME ?”

An expression often used is some of the more repulsive negative ads of the recent political was “*WE can't trust - - - -to represent US,*” or “*He's not on our side.*” Skillfully designed ads meant to create doubt about a candidates character and ability.

Very little is ever said about ideas, ability, or if the candidate was best for “*you and me*” indicating the interests of the country as a whole rather than a limited special interest constituency.

What is more disturbing is only expecting a turnout of 50% on Nov. 2.

Maybe too many people believe the polls and think their votes don't count. Apparently the millions of dollars spent to attract their votes either went unnoticed or turned them off completely.

If true it means that 26-30% of the eligible voters in Wisconsin could determine who represents all of US in Madison and Milwaukee. Perhaps the 50% who aren't expected to bother to vote should be referred to as “THEM.”

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SUBSCRIBE FOR FIRE PROTECTION?

The excellent fire protection we all receive is expected as one of the municipal services we receive for our tax dollars. It is one of the items we don't often complain about paying for.

Apparently some parts of the country with lower taxes operate differently. The Nov. 1, issue of *TIME* has a story of a residence in Tennessee that burned to the ground while the local fire dept. stood around and watched. The reason, the fire department was an independent agency, and residents had to subscribe for service with a \$75.00 annual fee. This apparently is a common practice in some parts of the country using both volunteer or full time departments. A way of keeping taxes low. It wouldn't work in Wisconsin where most fire departments cooperate and work together when necessary.

The story stated that the department did respond, but only to spray water on the residence of a neighbor who was a subscriber to the service and prevent the fire from spreading to his property.

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USING THE ELECTRICITY WE SAVE.

We are told that we should use energy saving fluorescent light bulbs In our homes to conserve energy and save the world. In the meantime the Packers have installed a 24 hour lighting system to heat and light their frozen tundra and keep grass growing the entire football season.

No word of the cost to operate or if energy saving bulbs would work to conserve energy and protect the environment like they are supposed to do for you and me.

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MAKING EVERYTHING LEGAL.

The Brown County Board is considering paying the county attorney an additional \$50,000 per year for his work in negotiating labor contracts between the various employee unions and the county. He is, in effect a county employee representing the citizens of Brown County,

We realize this is a highly sensitive job, with the interests of taxpayers at stake and on the table along with that of the county employees who work for us.

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FIRST BALANCE THE BUDGET.

Whoever gets to sit in the Governor's chair will have his hands full. The balance in the states general fund is estimated to be about \$265 Million less than forecasted. The biggest problem was spending for Medicaid which exceeded the budget by \$222 Million. Unless a solution is found, Medicaid will continue to grow and be one of the largest expense items.

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A BILLION BUCKS FOR ADS.

Just like the Government tries to boost the economy by dumping in billions of stimulus dollars, private enterprise also pours in money that just seems to disappear.

How else do you describe the estimated **billion dollars** being spent nationally in advertising for the Senate, Congress, and Governors races. It will probably be even more. Most of this originates from political contributions, and aside from profiting TV stations and advertising agencies we don't hear of many jobs being created. There may be a few positions changing employees however.

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TV STATIONS GET STIMULUS \$.

Somebody does keep track. The *Journal/Sentinel* reported that between 9/1 and 10/20/10 a total of \$10,776,430 was

spent in Wisconsin for a total of 26,536 TV ads for the Senate race and \$11,252,760 went for 27,302 Governor ads on all of the states TV stations. It was not disclosed how much of this total came from interest groups or the political parties, but it looks more like \$22 Million bucks was spent on negative rather positive advertising.

We say this every election. There will be a lot said about election reform after Nov. 2. So far this has probably been the most despicable campaign in memory but with so much at stake it is difficult for the political parties agree on any rules that may compromise ones advantage over the other. If only 50% or eligible voters vote as predicted this is expensive advertising. We hope the total was higher but it shows that people are simply turned off by politics.

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WHO RUNS THE GREAT LAKES?

Due to our location we are probably more concerned with the Great Lakes than others. While pollution and invasive species, a joint U.S. and Canadian board that overseas Great Lakes issues claims we should just learn to live with lower levels apparently caused by dredging in the St. Clair River near Detroit to allow larger ships to navigate.

Solving Great Lakes problems is complicated by the fact that at least 50 federal and local agencies are involved; each with their own agenda and areas of responsibility.

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AFTER THE ELECTION.

If the Republicans do win control of Congress, one of their first initiatives may be repeal of Obamacare. While this legislation may have been welcomed by many people there are still too many uncertainties present for most of us to accept and feel comfortable with.

In the meantime Federal regulators are busy adding rules and regulations as authorized in the 2,000+ bill and moving full speed ahead to permanently lock it in place. It will be interesting

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STILL TIME FOR TORT REFORM?

One area that was completely neglected in the Obamacare bill was tort reform. Limits on how much medical practitioners could be sued in cases of malpractice.

While we understand that patients have rights and deserve protection

from the wide variety of procedures which can go wrong by medical providers, the personal injury lawyer industry has protected their trade effectively. As a result malpractice insurance costs doctors and hospitals millions annually and is a major factor in the cost of health care. A recent survey indicated that 92% of doctors would like to see some tort reform.

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YOUR BILL IS IN THE MAIL.

Mayor Schmitt has proposed a preliminary budget with the same tax rate as last year. This would be welcome news for city residents considering the county and school districts have proposed increases. The fact still remains that the rates required for the services they receive or assessed value of their property aren't what they are concerned about as much as the bottom lime which is how much money it will cost compared to last year, and if they will be able to handle it considering the cost of everything else is rising out of sight.

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DOES IT REDUCE TAXES?

Schools all over the country are having problems funding their budgets. The Nov. 8, TIME magazine has an article telling of schools selling advertising space on hall lockers, and even on the outside of school buses. Also, even putting paid advertising on items like permission passes and lunchroom supplies.

It seems to work for NASCAR and the Green Bay bus system..

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SAVING MONEY PART OF THE JOB,

The story of the Corp. of Engineers awarding the contract for the Remard Isle causeway at 3 times the lowest bid is just one good example of Govt. waste with taxpayers. We read of employees able to triple their listed salaries through overtime. We read of questionable pork projects costing millions with no real need or purpose.

In private business, responsibility for wasteful spending rests for the person in charge. Whether it is the manager of a store or department or the president of the business it is the person who makes the decision to spend the money who is to blame. They can all be replaced.

Why isn't it the same with government? Concern over the taxpayers money should be foremost. It seems too

many of our servants are concerned more with spending our money than with saving it.

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WISCONSIN POOR FOR BUSINESS.

As much as they talk job creation in Madison, both the Tax Foundation and Mclver Institute have released studies claiming we aren't going anyplace.

Based on several comparable criteria, Mclver ranks Wisconsin 43d for job creation The Tax Foundation ranks us #42, down from #39 last year.

While Gov. Doyle and his administration tend to ignore negative reports you can be sure that businesses considering investing in Wisconsin can tell you what they think of us.

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WE'RE #1.

One area where Wisconsin is #1. Researchers from Wesleyen College in Connecticut kept track and found that there were more TV ads for the U.S. Senate seat in Wisconsin, 18,256, during a five week period than in any other state,

Goes to show we have something beside the Packers to think about.

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IS BIOMASS IN OUR FUTURE?

One of the new sources of energy the state has been looking at is Biomass, whereby waste and wood products are converted to electrical energy.

One new plant going on line is expected to consume 500,000 of raw material each year. While there is plenty of material available in Wisconsin at present, there was concern that this could reduce the amount of raw material available for other industrial uses in the future.

As usual, lots if things to wonder about.

Jim Frink

"Things That Make Us Wonder," consists of thoughts that occur to us, mostly taxpayer related in some way from current news events. We use reliable, published information and statistics, Some items are unimportant and probably not worth commenting about while others could easily be expanded to full length feature articles worthy of future study and action to protect our interests as taxpayers. We try to cover a wide variety of subjects in limited space and perhaps put a different spin on items from what you read in the papers or see on TV. We acknowledge that our perspective on some items in this column may be contrary to some of our readers. However, one of our purposes is to encourage debate, as we realize there are two sides to every question. Comments or suggestions are welcome to include in this section of the "TAX TIMES."

The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association
P. O. Box 684
Green Bay, WI 54305-0684

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and more.

The TAX TIMES - November, 2010

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

- Tuesday - November 2, 2010, Election Day. DID YOU VOTE ?
- Thursday - November 18, 2010. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Tittletown Brewing Co., 2d Floor Meeting Room.
Discussion of Nov. 2 Results and BCTA Planning.
- Thursday - November 25, 2010 - HAPPY THANKSGIVING !
- Thursday - December 16, 2010. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Details to be announced.
- Thursday - January 20, 2011 BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Details to be announced.

Unless otherwise notified, BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 Noon, at Tittletown Brewing Co., 200 Dousman St.

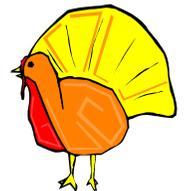
Meetings are open to the public.

BCTA Members, their guests and other interested parties are cordially invited to attend and participate in our open discussions.

COST: \$8.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.

Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.

November,
2010



“Government does not solve problems, it subsidizes them.”
. . . Ronald Reagan
“There is no such thing as a non-political speech by a politician”
. . . Richard Nixon
“All people are born alike – except Republicans and Democrats.”
. . . Groucho Marx

SUPPORT THE BCTA

New Members are Always Welcome. Call 336-6410
Write us at P. O. Box 684
or visit our website
www.BCTaxpayers.Org
for Details.